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continued on the back inside cover

Cover: Himalayan Gray Langur *Semnopithecus ajax* (adult female) © Rupali Thakur.



The Fawcett's Pierrot *Niphanda asialis* (Insecta: Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) in Bandarban: an addition to the butterfly fauna of Bangladesh

Akash Mojumdar¹ & Rajib Dey²

¹ Department of Computer Science & Information Technology, Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology, Dhaka 1230, Bangladesh.

² Amarabati Road, Madhyamgram, North 24 Parganas, Kolkata, West Bengal 700019, India.

¹ akashmojumdar99@gmail.com, ² rajibdey88@gmail.com (corresponding author)

Niphanda asialis de Nicéville, 1895 is a widely distributed butterfly that occurs from southern Assam-Meghalaya-Mizoram (northeastern India) to Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Yunnan (<http://yutaka.it-n.jp/lyc4/81450001.html>). This species is 'rare' in India (Kehimkar 2016). *Niphanda asialis* (earlier known as *Azanus asialis*) was first described by de Nicéville (1895), based on a single collected specimen from Hofrath Dr. L. Martin.

This survey was carried out for three days in the month of January 2022 at Nilgiri Hill resort area. The area is situated at Bandarban district (21.18–22.35 °N, 92.05–92.67 °E) under Chittagong hill tracts in the southeastern part of Bangladesh. This hill tracts range is usually enveloped with mixed sub-tropical evergreen forest and most of the natural forests. During the expedition, the first author sighted and photographed an individual of unknown butterfly species (Image 1) at Nilgiri Hill resort (21.912 °N, 92.326 °E; 661 m) using Canon 77D at 1230 h (GMT +6.00) on 21 January 2022 (Image 2). The butterfly was basking about 1.5–2 m above ground on an unknown leaf. Later, the individual was compared with Ek-Amnuay (2012), and keys characterized by de Nicéville (1895). The observed individual was tailless in the hindwing (Kehimkar 2016).

Additionally, it had narrow fuscous band on the costa and outer margin at upperside of forewings, black obscurely tipped with white cilia and a marginal row of white encircled lunules at both wings (de Nicéville 1895). Moreover, prominent, dark black sub marginal spot in space 2 of underside of forewings with male shining purple colour of upperwings provides evidence to species level recognition (Ek-Amnuay 2012; Kehimkar 2016). *Niphanda asialis* is quite similar to *Niphanda cymbia* but it can be distinguished by the following keys. The upperside of *N. asialis* (male) having violet or shining purple with sparse presence of androconia, while in *N. cymbia*, it is dull purple and lack of androconium. The female of *N. asialis* is browner with some basal blue scaling which is absent in *N. cymbia* (Corbet et. al 1992). Though none of the species of *Niphanda* is previously reported from Bangladesh (Larsen 2004; Chowdhury & Hossain 2013; IUCN Bangladesh 2015; Roy et. al 2021), but *Niphanda asialis* and *Niphanda cymbia* are recorded from adjoining regions of northeastern India (Varshney & Smetacek 2015).

Previously the species was recorded from North Kanhmun (in Mamit district) of Mizoram state of India (<https://www.gbif.org/occurrence/3333343760>) which is close to Bangladesh, and Vanghmun village (in

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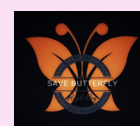
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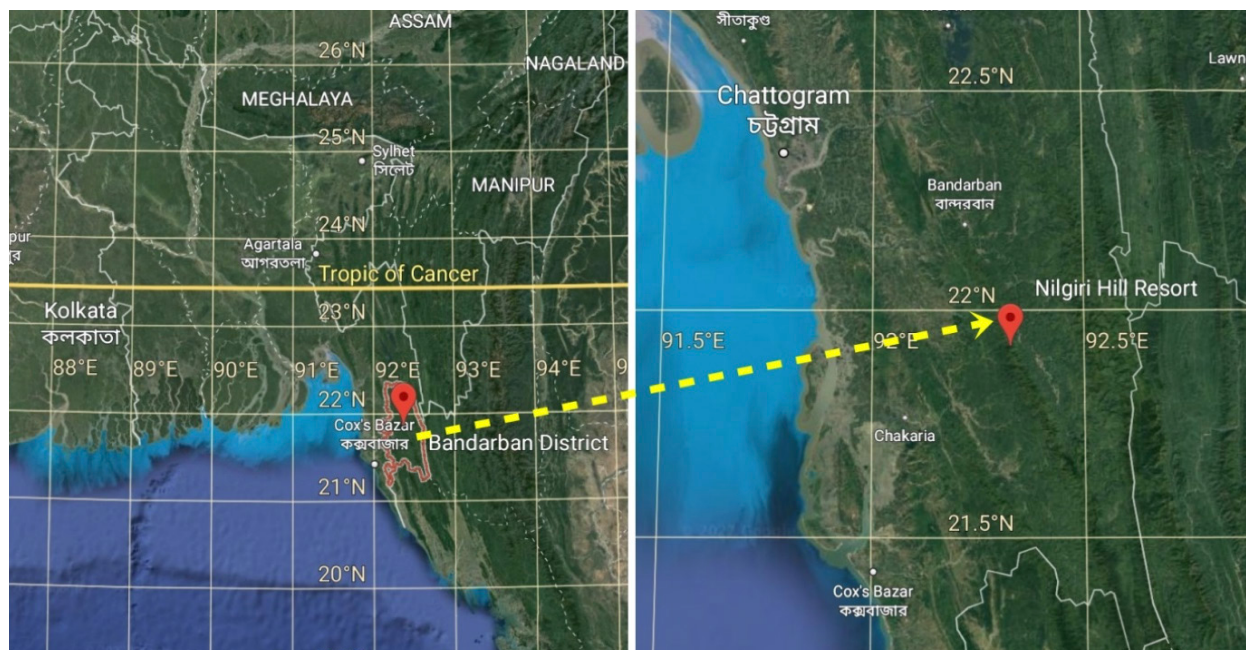


Image 1. Distribution of the *Niphanda asialis* in Bangladesh.

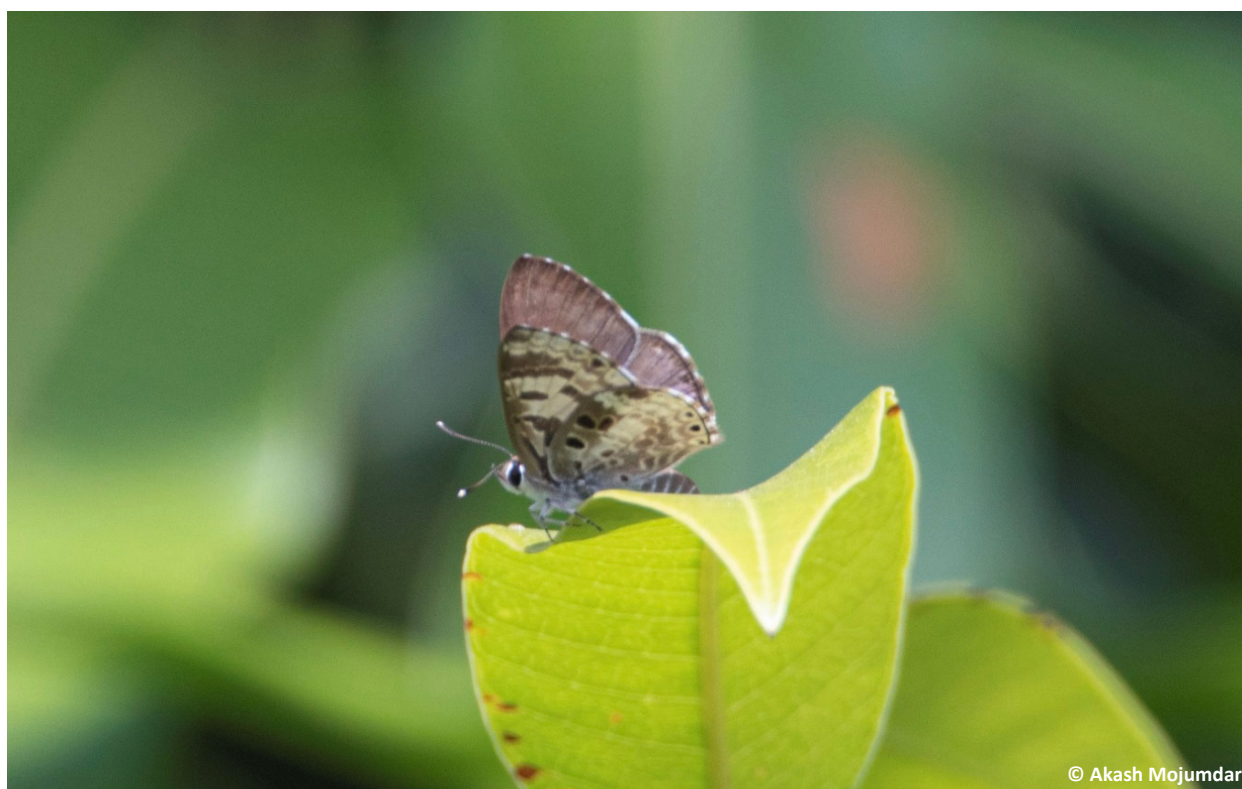


Image 2. Basking behaviour of *Niphanda asialis* in Nilgiri Hill resort, Bangladesh.

North Tripura district) of Tripura (<https://www.gbif.org/occurrence/2540788739>) and Barail Wildlife Sanctuary of Assam (Gogoi et. al 2016). Consequently, the species was recorded from Nilgiri Hill of Bangladesh (aerial distance: ~184 km from North Kangmun, ~228 km from Vangmun, ~346 km from Barail Wildlife Sanctuary). The northeastern region (greater Sylhet) of Bangladesh is also home to some mixed evergreen forested areas similar to the Nilgiri Hill forest. The northeastern part is also very close to Barail Wildlife Sanctuary. As a result, the species may also be found in northeastern mixed evergreen areas of Bangladesh.

The current study thus establishes the presence of *Niphanda asialis* in Nilgiri Hill of Bandarban district by effectively presenting the first photographic proof from Bangladesh.

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